BRITISH COLUMBIA
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Education Report

Province Honours Educators

Premier Campbell and ministers Bond and Abbott congratulate representatives from Salmon Arm West elementary school for their work in early learning.

To begin Education Week, the Province recognized eight schools that have demonstrated innovation in important areas. Later in the week, the Province will honour the nearly 20 B.C. educators who won Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence or were designated as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals. Read more about the featured schools and visit the Ministry of Education website soon for details on this year's most celebrated B.C. educators.

Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Today marks the beginning of Education Week in B.C. This is an opportunity for all of us to celebrate the great work that goes into ensuring our children receive an education that is among the best in the world.

This year's theme is "Celebrating Excellence in Education". As I've toured schools and classrooms around the province I've had the opportunity to see first hand such excellence in action.

This week we will be celebrating excellence and innovation in B.C.'s education system in a number of ways.

To kick off the week, we are honouring schools that have shown unparalleled leadership and innovation. Later in the week, we are inviting to the legislature two groups of education professionals – teachers and principals – who have recently been honored on the national stage.

I want to thank all of you – parents, teachers, support staff, trustees, administrators and students – for all that you do to help make British Columbia's education system among the finest anywhere.

I've enjoyed meeting many of you during my district tours, at the parent and teacher congresses and at your professional association meetings.

Thank you for everything that you do for B.C.'s students, and I encourage you to join us this week as we celebrate B.C.'s excellent education system. Video message.

SPECIAL FEATURE – KUDOS

While many schools have shown leadership and innovation in Aboriginal education, early learning, the environment, healthy schools, literacy, and trades and skills development, the following will be honoured during Education Week.

The Aboriginal education category winner was the Coast Tsimshian Academy in Prince Rupert. Now an independent band-operated school with new teaching methods, positive attitudes, and a great deal of community support, it is raising the academic, literacy and self-esteem levels of students.

The early learning category winner was Salmon Arm West elementary, where caregivers attend once a month for Family Literacy Day aimed at children age three to Grade 5.

In the environment category there was a tie. Bowen Island Community school has a community garden that has supplied both their local organic food store and the school's lunch program. Nechako Valley secondary has an educational woodlot that has provided students with many learning opportunities, including a study of the mountain pine beetle.

There was a tie in the healthy schools category, as well. At Ecole Austin Road in Prince George, students have created a courtyard garden to make salads. At Qualicum middle school they have a fitness centre with a class set of stationary bikes, plus organized athletic activities.

The literacy category winner was Tatla Lake elementary-junior secondary, which uses multimedia to involve students, their families and the community in literacy.

The trades and skills development category winner was A.L. Fortune Secondary in Enderby. Students are exposed to hands-on trades training through the YES2IT junior trades program. ACE-IT, including the Machinist-Millwright program taught by a certified teacher and journeyman machinist, serves older students.

Ninety-four schools were nominated. These recipients were chosen by a selection panel consisting of a student, teacher, parent, principal and superintendent. Well done! Read more.

Touching Spirit Bear
Ben Mikaelsen

Reading Corner

Fifteen-year-old Cole is violent and angry and plays the blame game to avoid taking responsibility for his actions. When he goes too far, he is given a choice: prison or Native American circle justice. He chooses circle justice thinking he is getting off easy when in fact he is about to begin a journey that will profoundly and permanently change him. This book is suitable for students in grades 6-8.